



WORD

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from Oxford University Press

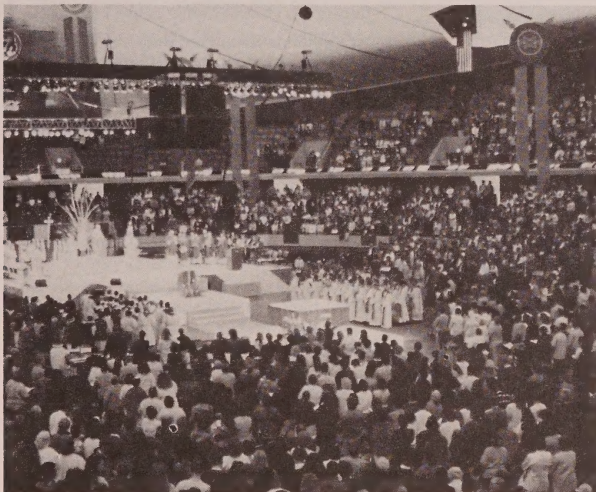
Volume 1 Issue 2

Spring 1996

Annual Subscription: \$ 24.95

At Los Angeles Religious Education Congress

More than 20,000 will explore 'God's Liberating Power'



A record-breaking 20,000 plus attendees are expected for this year's L.A. Religious Education Congress March 21-24 in Anaheim, CA.

Anaheim, California, is the location of Disneyland, but it's going to have some serious competition from March 21 - 24. That's when attendees of the Los Angeles Religious Education Congress 1996 will be praying, celebrating, witnessing and educating right across the street at the Anaheim Convention Center.

Sister Edith Prendergast, Director of the Office of Religious Education for the Los Angeles Archdiocese, discussed Congress '96. "The theme for this year's Congress is 'God's Liberating Power' and registrations have already surpassed previous years," she said. "We have about 17,500 adults and about 10,000 youth preregistered at this

stage. We expect at least 20,000 adults for Congress and 10,500 for the Youth Day. The Congress will also feature some 252 exhibitors who have been invited to exhibit instructional aids, publications and resources.

Among those exhibitors will be Oxford University Press which may be found at Booths 331, 333, and 335.

According to Sister Edith, the Religious Education Congress began in 1965. "In the early seventies we began to add a youth evening. Eventually, a youth day was added and it now services more than 10,000 youth. Many of them are from our own Archdiocese and the Orange area." The original purpose of the Congress was to provide in-service training for the Catechists, DRE's and teachers. Sister Edith explained that the Los Angeles Archdiocese has a strong tradition of providing these type of opportunities. "Along with the big Congress in Anaheim we also do nine other events for 500 to 1,000 people in all the various regions."

She cited one of the goals of the Congress as the continuation of in-service training and providing the attendees with the opportunity to listen to the issues facing the Church in the areas of Multiculturalism, Evangelization, Catechesis, and Scripture. "Congress is also about giving people a sense of community, a sense of Church that's bigger than themselves or their own parish," she said. "All the people here look forward to Congress. It's like their big get together down in Anaheim. Some parishes send 50 or 100 people so we try to keep the cost as reasonable as possible. They take hotel rooms and spend the weekend. It's a real renewal of parish spirit and teams of people."

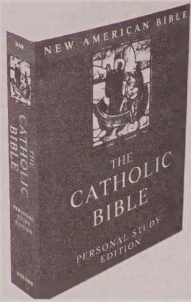
Sister Edith also emphasized the training and formation of Lay leadership as a major focus of the Religious Education Congress. "We feel that is key for the present and the future of the Church." She pointed out the Religious Education Congress has many workshops on leadership, setting a vision and working within a parish, how to deal with conflict, and aspects of leadership style.

The director also cited as the focus of the office its ministry to the leadership of the Los Angeles Archdiocese. "We are about calling forth, empowering and enabling leaders and giving them the skills to serve in their religious education ministries. That's why we do a variety of Bible Institutes, various Evangelization efforts, Catechist formation and advanced Catechetical ministry events."

See "Congress" on page 2

Special Issue...

1996 L. A. Religious Education Congress



The Catholic Bible: Personal Study Edition Readers are telling us how they use it!

In the last issue of WORD we asked subscribers to tell us about their personal experiences with this new resource. Judging from the responses, *The Catholic Bible* is really making a difference in people's lives, leading them to an enriched understanding of the Bible. Here are some excerpts from the letters we've received:

"I write homilies for a Diocesan publication. I consult various Bible commentaries...but I'm finding that my Oxford *Catholic Bible* is one of my favorite resources. The reading guides offer good, solid information to help broaden my understanding of the text."

—Diana Hartley; Lay Minister, Webberville; MI

"I locate the particular verses, along with the related Reading Guides, maps, and introductions...read the Scriptures slowly, being

careful to use the footnotes...look up any unfamiliar terms using the Glossary provided at the back of the Bible...spend some time trying to think about what I have just read and end my study session with a prayer of thanksgiving."

Pat Yanchak; Bible reader; Barnesville, OH

"What a wonderful resource [this] will be as small adult groups desire to gather for Scripture study and prayer! With almost 500 pages of background notes, including excellent charts and illustrations, learning is made easier and more people can be effective catechists of the Word."

Sister Katherine Naughton; Regional Director,
Bronx Catechetical Office; Bronx, NY

Please keep sending in your letters—the editors are anxious to hear more about how *The Catholic Bible: Personal Study Edition* has helped people understand Scripture. Write to them at: "Sharing the Good News", Oxford University Press, Bible Department, Attn. Mark Tauber, 198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016.

Congress

From page one

"While the smaller workshops that deal with the nuts and bolts of Religious Education happen at the smaller regional



Sister Edith

events, the Congress strives to enrich and motivate its participants to think about Church and the wonderful traditions of the faith," Sister Edith said.

"Congress participants take what they have learned into their own lives and go back into their parishes to share faith with renewed enthusiasm."

Spirituality is also an important aspect of the Anaheim event. "Usually at Congress there are a lot of workshops on prayer, spirituality, and spiritual formation of all kinds. I believe as Religious women and priests we received a lot of Spiritual formation from our communities. Now it's time for us to share that spiritual formation with our lay ministers so that their formation is holistic and spiritual. It's not enough to just be well grounded in the content of the programs and skills required for leadership. Their leadership role has to come out of a deeper faith that reflects a communal spirituality, the spirituality of the parish, and the spirituality of the person

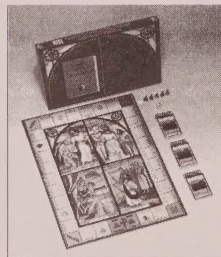
with all of those aspects very connected to the spirituality of the Archdiocese."

"As people of Church, community prayer is most important to us. Liturgical events are key at the Congress and should be vital in the lives of Catechists. What we are trying to model through Catechesis has to be very connected to Liturgy with one flowing into the other. We try to connect our liturgical themes to being of service, to the reign of God in the hearts of people and the call for us to be involved in the work for Social Justice and Peace," she said.

Another important element of the the Congress is the strong support it receives

from Church leadership, especially Cardinal Roger Mahoney, the Cardinal Archbishop of Los Angeles. "Our Cardinal comes with us on Thursday and stays the whole weekend of Congress. He walks among the people, being present. That's a wonderful symbol that we have that kind of support from our Cardinal. He's very supportive of Congress and he just makes it a priority in his calendar," Sister Edith said.

The projected attendance for this year indicates that the Congress will be a priority for a great many Catholics and promises to be a rewarding experience for all involved. Copyright 1996 Richard J. Nare. All Rights Reserved.



"Divinity Catechism Game"

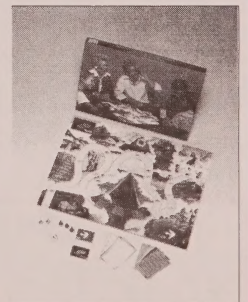
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Educational Religious Games

Available at Booths 331, 333, and 335



"Family Bible Game"

Director sees 'great hunger for scripture': Bible Institutes work to meet that need

Sister Edith Prendergast is certainly no stranger to the concept of Scripture study and how it can strengthen the faith experience of today's Catholics. As Director of the Office for Religious Education of the Los Angeles Archdiocese, she sees first-hand the needs and desires of the area's Catholics. "I think there is a great hunger right now for Scripture in our Archdiocese," Sister Edith remarked. Sister Edith and her staff are nurturing that hunger through two Bible Institutes held each year. They also use resources such as Oxford University Press' *The Catholic Bible: Personal Study Edition*.

The English Scripture Institute is run in collaboration with Loyola/Marymount College and is held at the college campus. It's done on a monthly basis and covers both the Hebrew Scriptures and

The practicum is a year-long experience where the participants come together to learn and then go back and work in their parishes. "Last month, for example, they examined the Scripture study resources that are available, discussed different models of Bible Study and how to get groups going," she said.

Sister Edith has reviewed Oxford's *The Catholic Bible: Personal Study Edition* and praised it as "a wonderful resource for Scripture and faith formation. She also stated that *The Catholic Bible: Personal Study Edition* will be introduced into the program this year. "The use of *The Catholic Bible Personal Study Edition* is being both

recommended and supported as one of the Institute's resources," Sister Edith said.

Both the English and Spanish speaking participants are also encouraged and trained to use video assisted programs or other processes that are available as part of their work. They then build their programs around Bible study, faith-sharing and praying which is at the same time both intellectual and pastoral.

The results of the programs are evident. The students receive specialized training and the parishes are provided with trained Scripture Study leaders capable of using a wide variety of programs. Copyright 1996 Richard J. Nare. All Rights Reserved.

"The use of *The Catholic Bible: Personal Study Edition* is being both recommended and supported..."

-Sr. Edith Prendergast

the New Testament. "We bring in the best speakers to work with this group. They are all people with scriptural backgrounds from either the colleges in the area or nationally. We do nine sessions that go from January to the next January," Sister Edith said.

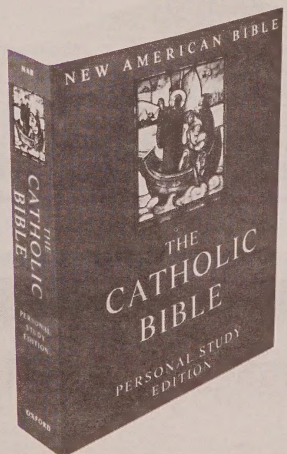
The program began with a group of 150 people who studied Hebrew Scripture the first year and the New Testament the second. "The third year is a practicum where participants gain knowledge of resources and practical experience in their own parishes," she explained. The instructional team then counsels them and reviews their efforts.

"Our first group has gone through year one and year two and are currently going into the practicum. We started a new track in English just a month ago and it has more than 200 people enrolled. In the previous group we had 150 taking it for certification and about 115 are continuing on so that they can get to the practicum and become Bible leaders in their parishes," she said.

"A wonderful resource for Scripture study and faith formation."

The Catholic Bible Personal Study Edition *The New American Bible*

Sister Edith Prendergast, R.S.C.,
Director, Office of Religious Education,
Los Angeles, California



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L. A. Congress to feature Technical Center, Oxford to demonstrate new Electronic Bible

When the Los Angeles Religious Education Office opens its 1996 Congress at the Anaheim Convention Center, it will also open a new chapter in the history of the event. Sister Edith Pendergast, the director of the office, announced that Congress '96 will feature a Technical Center at the entrance to the Exhibit Hall.

"The Tech Center will be equipped with the Internet and on-line services and capabilities for CD ROMs," Sister Edith explained. Publishers who have electronic product of interest to Congress participants will demonstrate the products at the Tech Center at pre-appointed times.

One of the interactive participants at

Oxford University Press will be demonstrating *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: Electronic Edition* at the Congress Technical Center. Look for us on Friday and Saturday.

the new Technical Center will be Los Angeles Cardinal Roger Mahoney. "He's go-

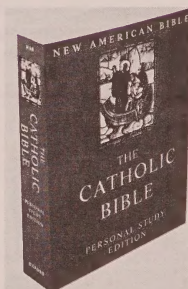
ing to take some time with us on the Internet this year. He's very interested in us moving forward in the area of computerized technology. He sees the possibility for use of the technology in religious education as well," Sister Edith said.

Oxford University Press will be demonstrating its *New Oxford Annotated Bible: Electronic Edition* at the Congress Technical Center. Participants will also be able to see the *New Oxford Annotated Bible: Electronic Edition* and register to win a *Turner Vatican Bible* featuring four-color illuminated manuscript pages at the Oxford Exhibit located at Booths 331, 333, and 335. Copyright 1996 Richard J. Nare. All rights reserved

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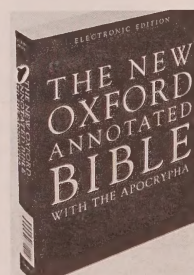
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For Ursula Bollini

Technology provides opportunity for personal relationship with God

Ursula Bollini believes "It's the great joy of Christianity that we are invited to a personal relationship with God." While her feelings reflect a two thousand-year-old tradition, Bollini advocates developing a relationship with God through the use of both the printed word and state-of-the-art technology. Bollini is Marketing Manager for Electronic Publishing at Oxford University Press. She recently discussed the advantages of *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha* (NOAB) in its electronic form.

The NOAB is the foremost ecumenical Study Bible and one of Oxford's most popular sellers. Bollini explained that the Electronic Edition includes all the features of the print version plus the invaluable added advantages made possible by the electronic format. "The screen design is very open and is particularly useful for someone participating in any type of Bible study program," she said. "The

Electronic Edition includes a number of features designed to aid the user in fully exploiting the text. For example, the user note function allows the user to open up a window and enter personal notes. Any personal notes entered are indexed along with all of the other Bible chapter and verses. This feature allows the user to go back and find his or her personal notes very easily."

Another advantage Bollini sees in the NOAB: *Electronic Edition* is that it allows the user to pursue inquiries more easily than the print edition.

"If I want to look up instances of 'fatherly love', that's more easily done with the Electronic Edition than the print version. With the print version you must use a concordance and manually access each individual reference. The Electronic Edition puts this type of research at your fingertips and, in some ways, is easier to use for the Bible neophyte than the print version."

The NOAB: *Electronic Edition* also

comes complete with the *Common* and *Episcopal Lectionaries*. They enable the user to look up readings for specific Sundays and special feasts and instantly switch from a Lectionary to the desired reading.

Other helpful features include editing functions such as cut and paste. "If you are working on a larger project, such as a homily, you can link the NOAB: *Electronic Edition* to a word processor and insert text into a homily outline," she said.

"For many people scripture can be intimidating. They don't know where to begin or get lost and feel there is no direction," Bollini observed. While she stressed the need for both the print and electronic versions, she added, "The NOAB: *Electronic Edition* provides the reader with the opportunity to accept the invitation to a deeper relationship with God using a highly organized, easily accessed electronic text." Copyright 1996 Richard J. Nare. All Rights Reserved.



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This Issue's Reference Source is *The Catholic Bible: Personal Study Edition* of the *New American Bible* and its Reading Guide. To answer the questions below refer to the Reading Guide Section that comprises the first 497 pages of the book.

1. What Valley separates the Temple in Jerusalem from the Mt. of Olives?
a) Hinnom b) Jordan c) Kidron d) Negev.
(Hint: See Reading Guide 325 [Map])
Answer: _____
2. In which of the Gospels does the parable of the "Weeds Among the Wheat" appear?
a) Matthew b) Mark c) Luke d) John e) All four
(Hint: See Reading Guide RG 304-311 [Gospel Harmony])
Answer: _____
3. A council of 70 members that functioned as the chief political and religious authority for Jews of Jesus' day was called:
a) Septuagint b) Tribune c) Knesset d) Sanhedrin
(Hint: See the Reading Guide RG 327)
Answer: _____

4. In which Gospel account of Jesus' arrest is he brought before Annas, the father of Caiaphas?
a) Matthew b) Mark c) Luke d) John e) All four
(Hint: See Reading Guide RG 376)

Answer: _____

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Clip the Quiz and send your entry to:

Bible Quiz-Attention: Mark Tauber
Oxford University Press Bible Dept.
198 Madison Avenue
New York, N Y 10016

Congratulations to our last Bible Quiz Winners!!

J. B. Goff of Dayton, TN,
Sister Lois Marie of Hallettsville, TX,
Theodore Khein of Columbus, OH

Oxford University Press announces upcoming conferences and Hofinger drawing

Members of the Oxford University Bible Department Staff will be present at the following meetings. Be sure to stop by their booth and say hello!!

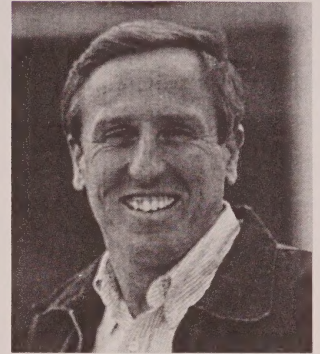
March 22-24 Los Angeles Religious Education Congress Los Angeles, CA Booths 331,333, and 335.

April 9-12 National Catholic Education Association, Philadelphia, PA (At the William H. Sadlier Company Booth.)

April 21-25 National Conference of Catechetical Leadership in Detroit, MI.

Ricky Warren is a winner!!

Mr. Ricky Warren of Natchez, Mississippi, was the winner of the drawing held at the Hofinger Conference in New Orleans. He received a *Holy Bible with Illustrations from the Vatican Library*. Another Bible will be awarded to the winner of the Los Angeles Religious Education Congress' drawing.



Mr. Ricky Warren

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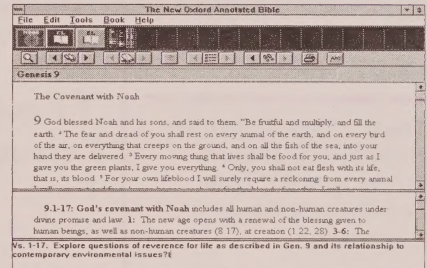


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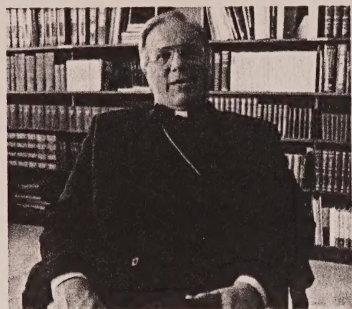
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HARD-LINER: Bruskewitz in Lincoln, Nebraska

The Wrath Of the Bishop

Will excommunication silence church critics?

IT IS THE KIND OF SNIDE DENUNCIATION usually reserved for dim-witted Hollywood moguls, not the sort of jab one would expect to find in a religious newspaper. But in the current issue of the *National Catholic Reporter*, columnist Tim Unsworth lambastes Bishop Fabian Bruskewitz as an incompetent cleric who has "been holding his cellular phone too close to his brain." What sparked the invective was Bruskewitz's move to excommunicate members of his diocese who belong to any of 12 groups deemed "perilous to the Catholic faith," including Call to Action, the Catholic lobby supported by 5,000 priests and nuns, which challenges church teaching on birth control and married priests.

Bruskewitz, one of only two U.S. bishops who forbids altar girls to assist at Mass, is the first American hierarch in more than 30 years to order a mass excommunication—an edict that prohibits Catholics from receiving the sacraments. His action has sparked dissent not only from area parishioners such as Jean and John Krejci, a former nun and former priest who said they would ignore the order, but also from church-law experts like Father James Coriden of Washington Theological Union, in Silver Spring, Maryland, who called the bishop's action, "harmful, wrong and canonically invalid."

Yet Bruskewitz has received encouragement from other bishops, and many parishioners back him too. "If you can't live up to what the church teaches," says Ed Petr of Hastings, Nebraska, "then you're in trouble."

VIEWPOINT

Wilfrid Sheed

Gay in the Eyes of God

Marriage is just one issue Christians need to face

IF THERE REALLY WERE A WALL BETWEEN CHURCH AND STATE IN AMERICA, marriage would be Checkpoint Charlie, the one the spies and diplomats keep pouring through. So intense is their common interest in the subject that the two sides have to keep an eye on each other because each immediately affects the air the other breathes. If, just to take this year's crisis, either side should start to allow same-sex marriages, the air over both of them would instantly seem fresher to some citizens and quite poisonous to others. Perhaps there should be talks.

Fortunately both sides do seem to speak almost the same language on certain critical issues. Simply because it bounces off so many people, marriage is the most political of sacraments, which means that it has to be made to work in the here and now as well the there and then. It has to play in Peoria, if only for the sake of the children, and the clergy has to think like politicians, even while the politicians are talking about love.

So if they were to hold talks, filled with the usual goodwill and cultural misunderstandings, they might actually agree for several precious minutes before someone or other stormed out, to wit and as follows: if gay marriages seem to weaken the institution of marriage as a whole, that's bad. But if they give gays a recognized place in society, that's probably good. You can't very well accuse gays of acting promiscuously in bathhouses if you won't offer them anyplace else to go.

And besides—adds the politician behind his hand—civic marriage has already been watered down to meet every conceivable request. You don't have to stay together five minutes longer than you want to these days, and certainly nobody is asking you to have children. To be turned down by such a club must be quite galling.

But of course religious marriage still is about children and permanence, so for believers the debate has to move on to those issues, although this is far from the end of it. In fact, such gays as already consider themselves married seem to value permanence so highly that one can imagine a day when they are the only ones left who still want to get married the old-fashioned way.

But all this will have to wait until the church has finally worked out what it thinks about homosexuality. Until recently, homosexuality was considered largely voluntary, a series of perverse choices by a free will. But as it becomes likelier that homosexuality is a physical predisposition, presumably God-given, the next kind of question has to be, What might God have had in mind, and is it significant that Christ never mentioned the subject? And the question after that: What injustices may have been done to homosexuals under the old understanding, and what can be done to avoid more of them?

None of which means gay marriages are inevitable, only that something is. The running argument between what feels Christian and what the church currently practices actually seems to be approaching climaxes on several fronts at once right now, as the roles of priest and citizen and married couple all struggle to be reborn in harmony. But this time gays will undoubtedly be part of the equation and, if all goes well, part of the harmony.

Wilfrid Sheed is an author and critic.



For better or worse: domestic partners

